



# ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE ERIE LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

*"You belong here."*

# The Parish Post

**Monthly Newsletter**

## ELCA: The Big Picture

How many of us have had our cataracts removed and new lenses implanted? My recent experiences corrected my distance vision brilliantly, and I'm learning to keep my reading glasses handy. I want to see both the big picture and the tiny details in life.

Our lives at St. John's could be seen as the tiny details in the big picture of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We worship and serve our communities directly in our congregational ministries. St. John's is part of the Erie Lutheran Conference (ELC) along with 17 other congregations, under the guidance of Dean, Pastor Jean Kuebler, who will continue to lead discussions of our common concerns and activities.

In mid-June, Erin Harper and Butch Karnes represented St. John's at the NWPAsynod Assembly, where Pastor Kristen Papson was named Bishop-elect, to begin a six-year term in September. Our Synod has five conferences and 72 congregations. Bigger numbers...

In Phoenix, Arizona from July 28 to August 2, even more Lutherans will gather in the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (CWA). Voting delegates from 65 Synods—including about a half-dozen from NWPAsynod—will select a new Presiding Bishop to replace Reverend Elizabeth Eaton, who has served since 2013, in two terms. They will also vote for a new Secretary, and will consider various policies, governance documents, and denominational budget. Delegates will consider a social statement, "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All." This statement and others can be found on the ELCA.org website.

The theme of this year's CWA is "For the life of the world." The ELCA website expands on the meaning and inspiration behind the theme.

We are church for the sake of the world — for the abundant life promised by God and fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for all creation.

We recognize the wisdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who said, "The church is the church only when it exists for others." Our constitution's "Statement of Purpose" boldly proclaims this commitment to be a people "called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world."

When we meet for worship and fellowship in God's house at 2216 Peach Street, we must keep our eyes open to our role in the bigger picture, sharing God's love with others.

*Carolyn Sturtevant*

**#youbelonghere@StJohnsErie**

† ST JOHN'S VISION STATEMENT †  
Loved by God, alive in Christ Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit, St. John's unconditionally serves God's people and shares Christian love.

**Congregational notes**

July has been an active month! It was great to exceed our quorum (40) for a vote on Dufford Terrace bylaws on Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Since then, we know that many have been absent due to medical procedures. We are keeping our medical teams and caregivers busy! We continue prayers for those recovering from, and for those anticipating medical treatments.

Vacations and visits have many on the road or in the air. Virginia, the Carolinas, Maine, Pennsylvania woodlands, South Africa—or just staying in our own backyards—have a safe and refreshing summer.

**Gem City Band Notes**

The audience enjoyed hearing from the Gem City Jazz Ensemble on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mark Eller, on saxophone, was among the musicians featured in solos during the lively numbers. The Gem City Bands continue their summer series with concerts at various locations in the area. On Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, we will be treated to a musical evening by the entire Gem City Concert Band, including clarinetists Mark Eller and Bill Kay. Come and bring your friends!

**Scout Troop Rummage Sale**

The Scouts will hold a Rummage Sale in the gym on Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30AM to 1:30PM. The congregation is invited to bring items for the sale on either Sunday, August 3, or Sunday, August 10.

**Waldameer Picnic Thanks**

The weather was kind to the crowd at the Lakeview Pavilion when we met for the annual church picnic! This year, St. John's issued an invitation to other churches in the Erie Lutheran Conference, and a group from Lamb of God accepted our invitation! The total number of picnickers was hard to compute while kids and parents moved between rides and the Pavilion, but we had great attendance. Thanks again to the extended family of John and Barbara Huff who fortified us with hot dogs, drinks, and chips to go along with the potluck dishes from the rest of us. Let's do it again next year!

**Holy Trinity Dinner—An Annual Tradition**

On the final Thursday of each month, the Lutheran churches in Erie take turns providing a meal for the community around Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 643 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street. A meal at the end of the month gives a boost to households whose food budget grows thin. As this newsletter goes to publication, a team is preparing to serve St. John's traditional Sloppy Joe meal to about 50 guests on Thursday, July 31st. We appreciate the donations of food and time to show God's love and hospitality to these neighbors.

**Thanks for Sunday Supper Generosity!**

Diane Bestvina marshalled the hospitality team that served 184 guests at the July 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Supper at First Church of the Covenant! She thanks the 17 cooks whose "Hot Chick-

en Dish” casseroles were a hit, and the 8 bakers whose cupcakes left the diners with a sweet taste in their mouths. It was a family affair for the Durst and Haffley groups who helped make up the dozen-strong serving team. Diane invites everyone to see the photos posted on the bulletin board. Great work!

### **The Camp Lutherlyn Report**

Several St. John’s youngsters missed our Waldameer picnic, but had their own fun at Camp Lutherlyn, supported by camperships from the Bahm Fund. When asked for details, they responded.

**Activities:** Swimming, climbing in the rock wall/Chapel rocks, playing on the jump pillow, campfire, zipline, high ropes, canoeing, ga-ga ball

**Meals:** The food was great at camp, my favorite being taco lunch. I really like the food and always leave filled; Tacos and cheeseburgers were among the favorites; They were the best meals I had

**Wildlife:** toads, squirrels; We saw some animals while we were out in the woods. Sometimes this was good and sometimes it was bad. We saw groundhogs, deer and snakes. However, the worst part was getting stung twice by wasps (Poor Nolan!)

**Lutherlyn teaches campers...:** “Sassafrass leafs can be represented as the father, the son, and the holy ghost”; trusting, team building; Each year there is a theme for camp. This year we were taught different ways that we can share God’s love.

**Your hopes for your next camping adventure:** see old friends; do the elements on the high ropes course; to do adventure camp; I’m looking forward to attending camp again next year, and hopefully the weather will cooperate so I can swim a bit more.

**Anything else in your own words:** another snack time; best camp I’ve been to. It was fun and you meet new people.

### **Cookies for Lutheran House in Chautauqua**

We send one car, four people, and dozens of homemade cookies for the afternoon Social Hour. Our homemade cookies are highly praised! Carolyn (who is unable to attend this year) welcomes volunteers!

### **Upcoming Events**

Sunday, August 10	ELC joint Beach worship service, 9:00 am, Cookhouse
Tuesday, August 12	St. John’s serves homemade cookies, Lutheran House, Chautauqua
Saturday, August 16	Scout Rummage Sale
Sunday, Sept. 7	God’s Work, Our Hands
Sunday, Sept. 14	What it Means to be Lutheran/Congregational Potluck
Wed., Sept. 17	Gem City Concert Band, 7:00-8:00 pm
Sunday, Sept. 28	CROP Walk

**Rec room update**

Work has begun on flooring. A new cement skim coat covers the old adhesive, making a clean surface for installation of flooring tiles. The floor may be completed by the end of July!

**Habitat for Humanity Begins New Builds**

The March Parish Post carried a description of the good work of this organization. They have completed a project and have begun their next builds. Here's a reminder of how we can help:

Volunteers – sign-up/waiver forms at <https://form.jotform.com/242903971179061>

Workdays are Tuesday-Saturday, in shifts 8-12 and 12:30-4:15, even in winter, warmed by heaters! Contact [liz@habitatierie.org](mailto:liz@habitatierie.org)

An Assistant Site Manager to coordinate the work of volunteers, 12-16 hours/per week, paid or unpaid for April - October [vermaak@habitatierie.org](mailto:vermaak@habitatierie.org)

Generous responses to their Capital Campaign to raise \$3m to build 18 houses and pay off their building.

Support through Erie Gives

Volunteers to cover hours at the ReStore on 4922 Pittsburgh Avenue, Erie, PA. Assist staff as they collect and sort items on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Check-out of sales on Friday and Saturday from 9-12 and 12-4. [re-store@habitatierie.org](mailto:re-store@habitatierie.org) 814 464-8946

**Backpack Blessing**

All are welcome to join us for a Backpack Blessing on August 24<sup>th</sup> during the 10:00 am church service. Special blessings will be given for a safe school year, and children entering kindergarten, middle school and high school will receive a special acknowledgement. A small reception will be held afterwards. Bring your backpacks, bring a friend and come join us as we kick-off a new school year!



## INVITATION TO OUR: CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

*Beginning September 2025*



**Those who will be in  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade and above  
are invited!**

**SIGN-UP SHEET:** on the church office window.  
**QUESTIONS?** Ask Pastor Ralph, Tim and Leslye Durst.



1st Sunday of the month  
following the 10AM service.  
Brew a Beer, Bottle a Beer,  
Drink a Beer.  
No experience necessary!  
Contact Tim Durst with  
questions.



## What It Means to Be a Lutheran

### MEMBERSHIP CLASS

**Sunday, September 14  
2:00 to 7:00 pm  
Dinner at 5:00**

**Sign-up sheet:**  
church office  
window.

*Current members  
are invited as  
a refresher  
and support!*

**New Members received at worship:  
Sunday, September 21**

## A potluck meal for the whole congregation!



**Sunday,  
September 14  
at 5:00 pm  
in the Parlor**

**Sign-up sheet:**  
church office window.

Youth Group will be held on the **FIRST SUNDAY** of each month. All children from PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to attend. Lunch will be provided. Bring a friend and come enjoy some fun, games and fellowship with us!

**When:** Sunday, September 7th

**Time:** 11:00 am (after the 10:00 church service)

**Where:** We will meet in the St. John's gym

**Who:** PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> grade (invite a friend!)

**Questions?** Contact Leslye Durst 814-323-2134



**Watch for summer get togethers!**



## Green Corner NWPA Synod Green Team

### Being cool the right way, can be cool!

Being “cool” can be both a description of our character, as well as our comfort with air temperatures. This Green Corner will suggest how we can be cool by maintaining cooler indoor temperatures in creation-friendly ways.

In the United States, mechanical air conditioning is often used to moderate summer interior temperatures, but there are less expensive means and more creation friendly ways of improving our indoor summer comfort. It is worth noting that in some countries one must now obtain governmental approval before installing air conditioning. That is partly a means of reducing the impact of electricity on our climate, but even without that kind of governmental restriction we can use less energy intensive strategies for cooling indoor spaces.

Trees: As trees mature, they can become effective sources of shade for individual homes. On a larger scale, community planting programs for trees and other vegetation can reduce the “heat island” effect found in many urban areas.

Open windows at night (night flush ventilation) and close them in the morning.

Close window coverings, shades, or blinds during the day. There are a variety of designs and prices that will block heat to varying degrees.

Exterior window shades, awnings, and shutters reduce the heating through the windows.

Insulate and check for air seal leaks around windows and doors. This is the same strategy used to keep homes warm in the winter. It is especially important when mechanical air conditioning is used.

Bake and wash clothes at night: Indoor cooking and clothes washing can generate unwanted heat. Grilling or other outside cooking may be feasible, along with planning meals that require less cooking. When cooking indoors, exhaust fans can control the cooking heat to some extent. While microwave ovens do generate some heat, it is usually less than for conventional cook stoves. Some electric companies provide discounts for using electric at non-peak times.

Dry laundry outside. If indoor dryers are used, exhaust fans are essential.

Use exhaust fans in bathrooms/showers and in windows.

Ceiling fans should blow down during summer (counterclockwise when looking up).

Use lighting that produces less heat – LED bulbs.

[https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/heat-islands/heat-island-compendium\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/heat-islands/heat-island-compendium_.html)

<https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/>

<https://www.motherearthnews.com/sustainable-living/passive-cooling-ze0z1604znsp/>

<https://time.com/6985139/how-to-use-fan-air-conditioning/>

The Green Team’s purpose is to “raise awareness of and advocate for the care of creation.” Our mission is to support and encourage creation care ministries, raise awareness, model creation care advocacy consistent with ELCA teachings in our faith communities and public life.

Like and follow us on Facebook: [Northwestern PA Synod Green Team – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.](#)

Contact us at: [nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com](mailto:nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com)

August 2025



## *Music Notes*

*“We Sing, We Serve. We Ring, We Serve.”*

### **New Choir Season:**

**First Rehearsal on Sunday, September 7 - 9:00 AM – Chancel Choir rehearsal  
11:15 AM – Bell Choir rehearsal**

**CHANCEL CHOIR:** The time has returned for St. John’s parishioners to make a joyful noise to the Lord in the choir loft. The Chancel Choir will be rehearsing at 9:00 AM Sunday mornings. Rehearsals will only be on Sunday mornings. This time was selected because of concerns about night driving (especially in the bad weather) and it saves an extra night out in everyone’s busy schedule. Anthems will be accessible and you do not have to be a trained singer. Come and join the fun and fellowship!

**BELL CHOIR:** Bell choir rehearsals will be after the 10:00 AM Church Service at 11:15 AM. We continue to look forward to the beautiful music of the bells. New members are welcome!

**ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:** The American Guild of Organists is offering Organ Scholarships for anyone interested in learning to play the pipe organ. All expenses will be underwritten by the Erie Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Applicants will receive a method book and ten lessons with a local organ teacher. You can learn to play just for fun or learn to play for a Church/professional setting. Brochures are available in the Church Narthex or contact Kathy Swanson.



## August 2025 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
					1	2 5PM WORSHIP
3 10AM WORSHIP	4	5	6	7	8	9 5PM WORSHIP
10 9AM Beach Wor- ship 10AM WORSHIP	11	12	13 6PM CONG. COUNCIL	14 11:30AM WELCA	15	16 5PM WORSHIP Scouts Rummage Sale
17 10 AM WORSHIP	18	19 7PM Dufford Terrace Board	20	21	22	23 5PM WORSHIP
24 10 AM WORSHIP Backpack Blessing	25	26	27	28	29	30 5PM WORSHIP
31 10 AM WORSHIP						

### St. John's Lutheran Church

2216 Peach St., Erie PA 16502  
 (814) 456-7596 [www.StJohnsErie.org](http://www.StJohnsErie.org)  
 "You Belong Here!"